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SUNDAY
MAY 9, 1954

Quiet morning at Versailles. Finished today Ferdinand Gregorovius' life of Lucrezia Borgia. The acknowledged illegitimate daughter of a Pope, who had many other natural children, she was the sister of Cesare Borgia, cardinal and freebooter, who murdered one of her husbands and, having for many years terrorized Italy, died at the age of thirty-one. Lucrezia lasted until thirty-nine, a model of feminine virtue during her third marriage, to Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. Pope Alexander VI, Rodrigo Borgia, was one of the greatest scoundrels imaginable -- that he could have been chosen head of the Church is almost incredible -- to have remained so until he was over seventy, and happy to boot, is even more remarkable. He, his mistresses, and their offspring turned the Vatican into the most worldly, luxurious, and corrupt of courts.

Came back to Paris this afternoon. The Jameses had dinner with us and left afterwards for Madrid.

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